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SHIP
OF SILENCE
&
OTHER POEMS



EDWARD UFFINGTON
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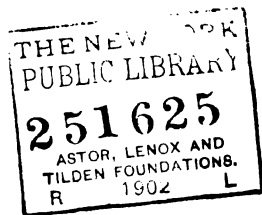
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THE SHIP OF SILENCE & OTHER POEMS



By EDWARD UFFINGTON VALENTINE
THE BOWEN-MERRILL COMPANY, *Indianapolis*

5.50



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TO
JAMES LANE ALLEN

Seibner Jan 24/32 1.00

THANKS ARE DUE TO THE ATLANTIC
MONTHLY, SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE, HAR-
PER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, THE
CRITIC, THE OUTLOOK, THE NEW YORK
INDEPENDENT, THE CHURCHMAN, THE
YOUTH'S COMPANION, AND THE NEW
YORK SUN FOR PERMISSION TO REPUB-
LISH CERTAIN POEMS IN THIS VOLUME

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THE SHIP OF SILENCE

And though I knew, I shall not know again ;
And though I weary, I must ever wait ;
And though I pray, yet will it not avail !
Peace—peace beyond comparing—heavenly peace
Dwells like a dove upon thy solemn spars,
And sheds a blessing on the silent crew
But here, among the noisy tongues of men,
The end is turmoil, tears and burthens ever,
And ceaseless fret—the Marah of the World !

My eyes are ever fixed on seaward lines ;
And haunting visions have their mock of me ;
As here I sit through all the burning day,
Friendless, and stony as these whitened cliffs.
Sails rising from the verge shall melt again,

THE SHIP OF SILENCE

And many vessels bring their merchant freight
Unto the harbor and the homes of men—
But, Ship of Silence, thou wilt never come !
Only in dreams my misty eyes behold,
How far from every port thy blessed prow
Steers onward homeless through the untraversed
 deep,
The hooded helmsman, pale with saintly fast,
Holding the helm with steadfast hand of faith,
His withered lips sealed by an awful vow :
And over all the brooding eyes of Christ,
And over all the constant wings of Peace !

Youth's fevered fancies preyed upon my blood,
And fought within my heart against the Vow !
I only of them all had manhood's heat,
I, only, had my yearning youthless youth—

THE SHIP OF SILENCE

While ghostly age was on their ragged beards,
And gray with age their girded gabardines,
And hoar the deck their noiseless sandals trod.
The waters, circling with unbroken rim
The patient pathways of the wingèd barque
Were not more waste than seemed my waste of
youth!

Oft in the midnight watches at the helm,
When all the Brethren in their lamp-lit cells
With knitted palms were bent upon their beads,
Sorely my heart was tempted to the sin.
The white stars brightening on the ocean's brink
Called to my spirit, as they slowly sank
To where lay half-way down the curving world
The bournes and regions of my hungry dreams,
The noise of marts, and song and strife of men;
But awe as oft o'ercame me, and my hand

THE SHIP OF SILENCE

Let fall the yellowed chart that fed my
thoughts,—

Awe of the Silence and the Silent Crew.

But most of all, beyond all other fears,

Awe of the figure of the dying Christ

That hung, colossal, on the mighty mast,

With arms outstretched against the blackened
spars :

So through the lonely vigils of the night,

The Vow constrained me, and the face of Christ.

But healed not, nay, or held me at the last,

For all my fasting and the bloody scourge.

And I grew blind unto the whitening dawn,

And found no calm within the quiet noon,

In sunset waters and the lulling foam.

And so, at last, the moment when I fell,

Casting the rope upon the guilty gloom !

THE SHIP OF SILENCE

And after many days upon the spar,
With famine clutching at the final crumb,
And anguished thirst, deliverance from the
deep.

Now doth my eld bear witness to the cup
Wherein my wanton youth dissolved its pearl.
I have beheld the fruitless end of lust
And how the World is but a mocking thing.
My whole heart sickens, and my chill bones ache
For to be gathered from this Vale of Tears,
Yea, ache with utter longing for the end.
For peradventure, Help behind the grave
Will grant that Peace I shall not know again
While in these rusting fetters of the flesh :
Nay, though my prayers and daily penance plead
And severance of this rebel tongue I plucked,
Repentant, from its roots, full long ago,

THE SHIP OF SILENCE

And these dead ears I pierced. My glazing eyes,
Dim with untimely rheum of constant tears,
Watch on in vain upon these whitened cliffs.
No gale wafts near the sail for which I long.
Only in dreams I see the blessèd barque
And in the starry light the face of Christ,
His outstretched arms that cling upon the spars,
Shedding a balm among the hooded crew.

SILENUS

“Ho, Silenus !”

The dryads are calling,
The satyrs are bawling,
While red leaves are falling.

“Ho, Silenus !

Holloa, ho—o !”

Like glowing lava-streams the sumac crawls
Upon the mountain's granite walls ;
And starting through the shade
The maples raid
The pine-trees' gloomy porches
With countless flaring torches,
Till through the air, like cinders flying,
The leaves drop dying ;

SILENUS

The purple asters glow like gems
On woodland hems ;
Half-shut in folds of tawny grass
The blue pool pictures in its glass
The swallows sweeping through the clouds
In twittering crowds ;
The red fox strains his supple shoulders
To scale the boulders
And taste the wild grapes' dangling crop ;
The light-foot squirrels hop
Through rustling sedges
And bear the smooth white nuts to rocky ledges.
"Ho, Silenus !
Holloa, ho—o !"

Thus down the slope the chorus flings its voice,
And waits, impatient to rejoice
In all the Autumn's harvest pleasures,

SILENUS

And foot the measures
Timed to the tap of the nut on the ground—
Their chief not found.
“Ho, Silenus!
Holloa, ho—o!”

Down in the village by the cider-press,
The whole day long in idleness,
The orchard pillagers,
The sun-brown villagers,
Make merry 'round their final barrel
Of ruddy juice with dance and carol.
Silenus, thither strayed with wits half addled,
The cask has straddled,
And leads the music's jocund din
With foolish nodding chin
Till o'er his flamy nose falls down
His leafy crown.

SILENUS

He leers with lips smeared round with lees
At every buxom maid he sees,
And waves the arm that would be placed
Around her panting waist.

“Ho, Silenus!

Holloa, ho—o!”

From woody hills against the sunset red
The sounds across the corn fields spread,
And lightly touch his ears.
Straightway he hears
The summons from the voicing zephyrs,
Two writhèd horns like any heifer’s
’Gin sprout from out his brow, his ears to peak,—
And ere the folk draw breath to speak,
Or start aloof
At sight of shag and goatish hoof,
Away the barrel on a hasty trot

SILENUS

Has borne the sot,
While all the honest people swear
It turned a bear !

And idly there the revellers stand,
Shading their eyes with arching hand,
While through the stooks, now lost from view,
Now glimpsed anew,
He jolts along, the jolly knave,
Shouting a stave,
And o'er his steed his fingers snapping,
And crook'd thighs to its plump sides clapping,
Till in the dusk they disappear.
The while the harvest-moon's red bloated sphere,
Like a great wine-skin, up the misty air
Gropes slowly from the east. And they declare
That 'gainst the forest's mystic portals
Sylvan Immortals

SILENUS

The truant wait, a half-nude band,
 With wreathèd staffs in hand,
And loose fawn hides and leafy dress—
 Or so they guess—
While evening winds toward them blow
The echo low :
 “Ho, Silenus !
 Holloa, ho—o !”

HELEN

She sits within the wide oak hall,
Hung with the trophies of the chase,—
Helen, a stately maid and tall,
Dark-haired and pale of face;
With drooping lids and eyes that brood,
Sunk in the depths of some strange mood,
She gazes in the fireplace, where
The oozing pine logs snap and flare,
Wafting the perfume of their native wood.

The wind is whining in the garth,
The leaves are at their dervish rounds,
The flexile flames upon the hearth
Hang out their tongues like panting hounds.

HELEN

The fire, I deem, she holds in thrall ;
Its red light fawns as she lets fall
Escalloped pine cones, dried and brown,
From loose, white hands, till up and down
The colored shadows dye the dusky wall.

The tawny lamp-flame tugs its wick ;
Upon the landing of the stair
The ancient clock is heard to tick
In shadows dark as Helen's hair ;
And by a gentle accolade
A squire to languid silence made,
I lean upon my palms, with eyes
O'er which a rack of fancy flies,
While dreams like gorgeous sunsets flame
and fade.

And as I muse on Helen's face,
Within the firelight's ruddy shine,

HELEN

Its beauty takes an olden grace
Like hers whose fairness was divine ;
The dying embers leap, and lo !
Troy wavers vaguely all aglow,
And in the north wind leashed without,
I hear the conquering 'Argives' shout ;
And Helen feeds the flames as long ago !

THE HAMADRYAD

The large moon smoulders on the misty hills ;
A chill wind gathers through the desolate vale ;
And, driven in moody spasms, the wet leaves
 wheel,
Or, batlike, cling against the casement pane.
Upon the hearth the pine log's dying fire
Leaps up anon in eager flash of flames,
Stirred by the passing of the night's wild sounds,
While from the ashes comes a burring note,
Continuous ; an azure coil of smoke
Lies charmed in sleep, dispelling from its dreams
Warm memories of the balsam-breathing woods ;
Athwart the walls the shadows, hand in hand,
Swirl in the measure of a mystic dance,—

THE HAMADRYAD

I gazing in the fire ; when through the flames
A gradual vision shows.

Upon one knee
She crouches 'mid the ashes, a young hand
Upraised against her ear which strains to catch
The sounds that shrill without, the other held
Unto the heaving beauty of her breast ;
Along her shoulder falls her hair, cone-crowned,
In color flamelike ; deep as dusky glens
Her lifted eyes, and full of mortal pain.
She, kneeling, listens ; then her languid lips
Sigh forth the music of entreating words :
“Is it thy voice, O North Wind, that I hear?
My spirit from some darkened swoon awakes
At thy bleak calling, O my love of old !
Is 't I whom, through the hollow-stretching
night,

THE HAMADRYAD

Thou seekest, wanderer, with impatient arms,
With voicings of despair on finding not?
O North Wind, is it I, thy love of old?
Too long, too long, perchance, hath fateful night
Enthralled my sense, since that dread hour I felt
The mortal anguish of successive blow
Cleave through my bark, until with utter pain
My being failed me! Lo, from sleep I wake,
O Wind Love, yearning for thy clasping arms.

'My soul is full of visions! All the past
Presses its joys against my falling lids:
I see again the gloomed and dreary wood;
The stars that watched our covert of content,
Where waited I thy passage and return,
Where mourned thee 'mid the verdant break of
spring.

Oh, sore to me the blush of budding leaves,—

THE HAMADRYAD

The world's awakening tore thee from my arms ;
Sombre with weeds of my worn widowhood,
My sighings hushed the robin's thrill of joy.
Haunted was I by soul of alien seas,
Of roaring forelands and wave-whitened
 strands,
Where thou didst wander ; with my boughs I
 breathed
Deceits of ocean sound to lure the gull
And straying sea-fowl, and from them I gleaned
Hope's tiding-word.

 "Thus dreamful of frore days,
I thrilled and waited through the summer suns,
Cheered by the gradual signs of thy approach.
Reared high upon the mountain's cragged steep,
I leaned, and heard the awful prophecies

THE HAMADRYAD

Of gathering storms search through the wasting
vales,

Where fell the leaves aflame with phantom fears
Of winter's coming dearth; while lightnings
reeled

And vanished into far, abysmal darks.

Faint grew my soul with love's foreshadowing
bliss!

The wonder-spirit of thy blest return

Flitted with feet snow-shod along the air,

And thou wert come! With spoil of boreal
realm

(The jagged brilliants of the pendent ice,

Wrought of sea-spells and frost's hoar wiz-
ardry)

Decking my gloomèd branches like a bride!

O Wind! hast thou forgot thy love of old?

THE HAMADRYAD

“Lo, now my being from these gyves of flame
Is loosening! And to thee and thy dear arms
My shade prepares to mount. Oh, flee not,
Love!”

.

Upon her pleading eyes the wan lids droop,
And through her lips escapes a lingering sigh;
From flushing hues to gradual change of death,
The vision fades and slowly melts away:
A wreath of smoke drifts upward from the
 hearth;
The flaking ashes lie, gray, desolate—
One last spark breaks, burns redly, and is gone.

HELIOS

What riots hath the golden god
 Who triumphs o'er the drowsy dale,
Whose foot upon the vernal sod
 Doth potently prevail !

His smile is friend to flowers' faces ;
 His naked body deftly dips
In wingèd quest of quiet places,
 To steal their sweetened lips.

His beauty is a happy boon
 For fancy's golden threads and themes ;
To heavy-lidded nooks of noon
 A constant cause of dreams.

HELIOS

Love is his purpose and his song,
And ecstasy, his eager art ;
His glory and his hope are strong,
And mirth doth make his heart.

No thoughts but gladness fill his veins ;
His moods are multitudes of joy ;
No dues but singing have his fanes ;
His moments, no annoy.

The heart, his arrows sting to bliss ;
His cup is pledged to life, not death ;
A magic mingles with his kiss,
To stay the fleeting breath.

All birds catch echo from his rites,
From nesting at his temples' eaves ;
He sends them forth against despites—
To every wight that grieves !

TO CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Sponsor of those whose choral voices sung
To teach our English lips their nobler ways ;
Who o'er the loom of speech their spirits flung
And wrought designs of beauty and high praise ;
Who, passionate of the past, from ravished urns
Revived the golden dust of precious dreams,
That smite our empty days with quickening beams
And melt the heart with flow of tragic tears :—
On the enduring heights thy memory burns,
 Above contentious claim ;
One whom the muse of old Olympian flame
Hath clasped secure against the inconstant years !

Outrageous death did hush too soon that song
Which vied with Avon's eagle on the skies,

TO CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Whose circling pinions o'er the lesser throng,
Widened beyond the scope of wondering eyes!
But tho' oblivion, at life's fallen sun
Upon the minds of men doth fix her hold,
And from thy brow would clutch the circlet gold
Thou wearest with such stateliness of mien,
Thy soaring spirit hath too fairly won

From the high gods the gift
Of grace and signal favors—that uplift
Its fire above the feuds of envious spleen!

The deathless dreams of Greece thy fancy robbed
Till marble shapes forswore their pale repose;
Upon their lips a sweeter pathos sobbed,
And their chill cheek with vital color glows;
While at thy master will, the antique torch
That Hero's white hand held, with frantic flame
Reveals the secret of her virgin shame

TO CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

And gives Leander's love a kindlier heat ;

And Dido leans across her palace porch

With anguished face that sees

Aeneas' sail let loose against the breeze,

Bearing away the freight of joy's defeat !

Thy soul, the muse's moon, was sphered to sway

The larger tides and passions of the heart ;

The clash and clamor of thy pictured fray

Stir in our spirit with an epic art

The answering memories of an outworn mood ;

While on fast feet of thy wild words we take

Some citadel of godlike thought and slake

With thee a violent thirst of lordly joy ;

Or sense of beauty breaks upon the blood

Before thy melting grace,

Which snatched the wonder of that Argive face

From the red ruins of tumultuous Troy !

TO CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Leander-like, across the straits of life,
Thy naked body dared the encircling dark,
The waves' bold buffets and the tempest strife—
Thy vision ever fixed on beauty's spark!
The mermaids wildly singing thro' the gloom,
Lured thy pale limbs to passion-pool and gurge,
Till night, consenting with the traitor surge,
O'erwhelmed the panting fervor of thy breath
And wrought the midway-waters for a tomb.

But when upon the shore
Fate viewed thy face, thy foe he was no more,
Kissing from off thy lips the stain of death!

Even as a wizard spell hath wit to turn
Chill vistas and November's leafless close
To bloomèd boughs, when waning seasons spurn
The burgeoned glamour of the summer rose,—
Thou bringest to us thy fearless faith of joy,

TO CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Lost to these latter days when men but dare
To walk the mazes of a mean despair,
Seeing how life doth raise unlovely hands
Against their dream to deaden and destroy.

Lo, thy perpetual page
Calls back the gladness of the golden age
And all bright shapes of old Arcadian lands!

KEATS AND CHATTERTON

"Fratres Helenae, lucida sidera."

Twin souls! Immortal brethren to the claim
Of Helen's beauty and her bright embrace!
Blessed with ambrosial favors and the face
Of Jove and all of clear Olympian flame!
Now set within the zodiac of fame,
Ye shine supreme in sempiternal grace,
Pouring the influence of your heavenly place
Upon the world's old bitterness and blame.

Your voices weave into the ethereal round
And wide harmonious mazes of the spheres,
Whose music shadows on our inner ears
And fills the heart with faint prophetic sound;
Such lyric notes ye make, as born of death,
Resume the strain life shattered in mid-breath!

THE LOVER'S ELEGY

I

Alas, that faith in search of fitting song
Should find but feeble words wherewith to knell
The death of one whose going did such wrong
Unto the world ! For like a season's blight
That makes the red rose wither at the well,
Thy end put all the summer's sweets to
flight.
Ah, Love, beyond the utmost of mine art
Thy worth doth beckon praises from my heart !

II

I would not have harsh music hurt thy dreams
Or let the fashions of wild grief oppress

THE LOVER'S ELEGY

Thy quiet's ear. As love the thought esteems
(What the sore wastes of time can never
fade!)—

How once thy beauty's sun did fondly bless
The daytimes of my being without shade:
So should my words fall softly like the dew
Or as these scattered honorings of rue.

III

Thy golden name, that was as aureole
For thy pure brow, the wintry-bearded earth
Did weep to see recorded on death's roll.
But now against such mind of sorrowing
The new year quickens with the sunbeam's birth
And the mild savors of the budding spring,
Whilst the false robin careless of thy fame
Doth torch the season with his feather's flame.

THE LOVER'S ELEGY

IV

Yet, though the times forget thee, do I keep
Faith with the past—still constant as of old—
Pressing my lips where thou art laid asleep
Behind death's door fast-shut beyond
recall,
Within thy delvèd chamber dark and cold—
Where thou hast locked with thee my life,
my all,
Clasping unto thy breast the unkind key,
And though I knock canst answer not to me!

V

Death, the grim gaoler, led thee looking back
Down that rude stair that goeth underground,
Albeit knowing all the world would lack
In loss of thee!—Yet might not he relent

THE LOVER'S ELEGY

If thou about his neck thy fair arms wound,
And yield thee as the May, long season-
pent,
Returns to heal the wounds of winter's bane—
That thou mightst solace this my spirit's pain?

VI

Thy favored daisies, which like handmaids kept
Watch o'er thy dreams and on the beaded drip
The ruthful darkness of thy tomb hath wept
Made prayers of peace, behold how to the
light
They tiptoe upward and with rose-rimmed lip,
That speaks a knowledge of thy beauty
white,
Look round, their eyelids wiped of olden dews—
As though thy heralds with some happier news!

THE LOVER'S ELEGY

VII

Is it they say, death is not all unkind
And thou art risen with the breaking spring?
Bidding me find in it with eyes less blind
How thou dost make its sweetness and its
 grace,
Engaged in bright, ethereal pleasuring,
And though thy spirit veils from me its
 face
It dwelleth where ecstatic faith may climb
And taste again a love secure of time?

TO A DAFFODIL MAID

I

Beneath the grievous winter skies,
Down ways that yet are icy-drear,
Her straying beauty lights my eyes
And fills me with a sense of cheer.
Is she some early flower that blows?
As on she fares thro' dying snows,
Heartward a happy fragrance flows;
And vernal thoughts my spirit thrill—
Borne from her locks of daffodil!

II

Sweet! Are you April-life at last—
Who wear the golden badge of spring?
And is my weary winter past?—

TO A DAFFODIL MAID

What is the joyous gift you bring?
Tho' fate may govern all amiss
And robins wake for me no bliss,
I leave upon your hair a kiss—
Before the moment's dream be lost
And hopes of spring have fled in frost!

LEAF AND LOVE

Whirl, oh, whirl on the breath of the wind,
Leaves that are red and gold ;
The airs of the autumn are cruel and cold,
Tearing the leaves from the tree !
Life of my heart, as the wind unkind,
Why art thou gone from me ?

Fade and be lost, ye dreams of my breast,
Dreams that were dear of old—
As bright as the leaves, as their red and gold !
Go, and be lost like the leaves !
Full is my heart with the year's unrest,
Wild as the wind that grieves.

Bare is my life as the naked bough,
Bent by the wailing blast !

LEAF AND LOVE

Oh, ghosts that gleam from the passionate past,
Pleading for joy that is sped,
Why must ye linger? Ye mock me now,
Now that her love is dead!

A MADRIGAL

My messenger is thy red garden rose
The South wind strows
At even, in painted petals, one by one,
Thy hand upon ;
Each leaf's a perfumed syllable to tell
I love you well ;
Ah, count them o'er and see how they repeat
Love's pledges, Sweet !

I voice my hope within the thrilling strings—
The prayer that sings
Upon the wind-harp neath thy cottage eaves
'Mid ivy leaves—
A meaning whisper for thine ear alone,
Whose tender tone,

A MADRIGAL

As soft thou sleepest, weaves love's longing
theme

Into thy dream.

I send my message in the wood-dove's quest,

That seeks for rest ;

Fluttering adown upon the warm wind's sighs

From summer skies

To nestle on thy virgin breast and plead

Its wildwood creed,

And there to die if thou care not to know

I love thee so !

A TRYST

My love is a-foot in the nodding heather,
Her brown locks bringing the breath of the sea ;
And she comes with lips of sunshine weather,
As fair as a flower the bourne of the bee.

And her heart is a hive of wilding blisses,
Of sweets enough for a life and a day,
She comes to me and a tryst of kisses,
Her mouth all moist with the salt sea spray.

And my idle love lets the brown sheep wander,
And her head leans back, and our hearts beat
free ;
And together we claim the whole sea yonder,
(A sail for her, and the gull for me !)

A TRYST

My Rose has a roof that the wild grass thatches,

Her mother-word is the sound of the sea.

Ah! where in the world is a heart that matches

The heart and the faith that she gives to me?

And we pledge our troth by the happy heather,

By the honest hue of its blossom-time.

And the brown sheep's bells that we hear together

Shall one day ring as our wedding chime!

A DOOMSDAY KISS

If the end of the world should come,
And the blight of the things to be,
While the heavens are dark and dumb
With the weight of the last decree—
In the pause, while the skies presage
The blight that is ready to fall,
What thoughts would my spirit engage,
What of life or of love recall?
Of one thing would my mind take thought,
'Mid the crowding faces aghast.
To one wish were my being brought :
That your lips I might kiss at the last.
Of naught else would my soul take heed
In the pause while the skies debate,
And with fear would my footsteps speed
Lest I come to your door—too late !

A DOOMSDAY KISS

There I know, my dear, you would wait,
With the old-time smile in your eyes,
Looking forth on the face of fate
With no fear of the riven skies.
Sure as now of your spirit's trust,
And the good, one is free to win,
And the life, not dead with the dust,
That is more than this self of sin.

And straight, with the fate at our hand,
I would claim your lips as my prize.
And you—would you understand?
Ah! the moment would make you wise.
And the world it might have its will,
And for me, be an end of bliss
In the faith that I'd then fulfill—
In the joy of that judgment kiss.

A DOOMSDAY KISS

You'd divine with your dawn-gray eyes,
By instant spiritual art,
All those things which you scarce surmise
Of the fire of a boy's full heart,
That to sense of itself is hid,
That is dumb where it fain would call,
By its tides and tumults chid,
While it lose what is best of all!

Well, the doom of the world delays,
And the years—they are, and shall be,
While the joy of the heart withstays,
And my life grows a dead decree
I am tired of the heaven's old blue,
I half wish for a judgment sky,
Just to prove you—that other you!—
Feel the pulse of that possible I!

A PARTING

On fresh spring skies the swallows call,

Good-by !

Alas ! for us, red rose-leaves fall—

Good-by !

From heaven's heart a singing bird

Makes rapture, and the year is stirred ;

For us remains an only word—

Good-by !

The whole world once, and now but this

Good-by !

We, who had all, with last lips kiss

Good-by !

Thro' wintertide and snowflake's fall,

Our heart's held summer's self in thrall ;

The swallows come—Can love recall

Good-by ?

A PARTING

Ah, sweet, sad days, whose star is set,

Good-by!

Glad days and dear! We loved. And yet

Good-by!

Waste are the ways where love was won,

The loaf is spent, the distaff spun,

Our lips must part. Love's day is done—

Good-by!

Tho' fate must forge, must faith forget?

Good-by!

Tho' we are far, must summer set?

Good-by!

Will love not live, tho' lips delay?

Is there for love no greeting-day?—

Ah, when we meet, will love still say

Good-by?

THE ROSE OF LOVE

A rose I gave to one I loved,
At parting, to beguile ;
Its snow-white lips she kissed apart,
With wan and wistful smile ;
Within her drooping eyes was born
A trembling tear, the while.

And ere the white rose faded,
Thro' the reverence of her room,
Around her dear, dead body
Swam its delicate perfume,
And like a seraph presence
Blessed the silence of her tomb.

I feel her influence on me,
Her tenderness and care ;

THE ROSE OF LOVE

A subtle fragrance 'round me breathes—

And lingers on the air—

The perfume of the snow-white rose

They placed within her hair.

With heaven's voiceless mysteries

What mind essays to cope?

A pilgrim thro' life's darkness,

In loneliness I grope.

I breathe a rose's fragrance,

And my spirit dares to hope.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

At morn unto my window-sill
Dan Cupid comes to learn my will.
"Friend," cries my little wingèd guest,
"Hast thou for me no amorous quest—
Is there no maid to whom thou'dst say
'I love thee' on this festal day?"

"Cupid," I answer, "there's a maid
Of whom my coward heart's afraid.
Not bold am I for lover's bliss—
I'll send thee, rogue, to steal my kiss,
And bear with thee this scarlet rose,
As token how my bosom glows."

Then Cupid thus: "Ho, that will I!
And hid therein I'll play the spy.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

For when the rose hath caught her sight,
She'll kiss it, sure, for pure delight ;
Then shall I pierce her with my dart :
A bee she'll think is at its heart.

"The while she standeth, startled, there,
I shall have vanished in the air ;
But, her sweet presence hovering near,
Thy name I'll whisper in her ear ;
And of the mystery naught she'll make—
She'll think it was her heart that spake !"

LOVE'S ADVENT

Love comes not—will not come !

This is the fate of some,

And my sad fate.

Even now the hour is late.

Love will not come, I said.

Oh, make my narrow bed,

And let me weep

Myself into dead sleep,

And o'er me lay

A coverlid of clay !

Whilst I unlocked with sighs

The fountain of mine eyes

And hid my face within my hands,

Across the lands

LOVE'S ADVENT

Came Love where I was weeping—
But ah, then sleeping !

Love went her way
From where I lay,
But unaware
A rose fell from her hair.
I woke ; and then I knew
That I, not Love, had been untrue.

SOUVENIR DE DANSEUSE

O suave and scented slipper .

Where is she, our worshiped tripper ?

Ah, my vacant little dove-nest, with your wanton,
withered bow !

Where are fled your freaks and fancies,

All the heydays and the dances ?

Where is she who poised and panted o'er the foot-
lights' starry glow ?

What other foot can fit you,

Since she fled who did outwit you,

She who robbed you of her fairy tread, its warm
and rosy throb ?

(Ah, I never guessed it parting,

When I saw that tear-drop starting,

SOUVENIR DE DANSEUSE

Caught a wilful glance she cast me, heard the
gathering girlish sob!)

What pretty wit you chattered,
In the days when nothing mattered!
When amid the fête you flitted o'er the crowded,
rose-strewn floor.

Ah, the dominoes and mummers!
And the laughter of new-comers!
Ah, those moon-lit nights of carnival—that move
my heart no more!

Youth's happy star is set!
(Like the rose-red cigarette,
That so often sparkled gaily in her careless finger
tips)

We have both outlived our uses,
Time's rebuffs and love's abuses;

SOUVENIR DE DANSEUSE

Dead our dreams and days of pleasure—with the
laughter of her lips.

Alone we two are left,
Of her beauty both bereft—
What a host of memories beckon from a passion-
purple mist!

Yet, withal, a gleam of gladness
Smites my sense of tears and sadness;
For her phantom wafts a greeting from the laugh-
ing lips I kissed.

She filled my heart so truly!
I ever answered duly
To the madness of her mazy moods, the fashion
of her sway.

Now it seems that time's devices
Are not worth their weary prices—

SOUVENIR DE DANSEUSE

I would barter all to spend again one old-time
foolish day !

The waxen lights are fading ;
We are done with masquerading ;
We are done with festal halls, with fêtes and
fancies—I and you.

In your emptiness pathetic,
There's a seeming quite prophetic,
For my heart that once she filled so well, is old
and empty too !

LOVE'S MEETING

When would I seek thee? In the noon
Of August night, when the round moon,
Cut on the purple of the sky,
Like the warm iris of an eye,
Full of dream shadows, seems to keep
Watch o'er the image of young sleep;
When the fond fingers of the air
Move lax and languid here and there,
And, scintillant with firefly rings,
Unbind the drowsy perfume's wings
Enfolden in the dove-cote of a rose,
Till its invisible presence goes
As passion's gentle messenger;
When all is silent, save the stir
Of willow withes, which drooping green

LOVE'S MEETING

Seem curtains murmurous that enscreen
A dryad's chamber,—save the sound
Of sibilant cricket from the ground
Upon the eardrum faintly falling,
Plaintive as a lost fairy's calling.

MARY MAGDALENE

Rising from her troubled slumber,
O'er her breast her mantle folding,
Mary hastens from the city,
Ere the early break of morning ;
Down the pathway dark with olive,
Where the rose's yester glory,
O'er the silver-threading streamlet,
Drops its leaf upon the water,
Mary, named the Magdalenè,
Hastens swiftly thro' the dawn.

Brighter grows the breathless gloaming
O'er the grove of giant cedars ;
Nature lies in guarded quiet,
Save one little nested birdling,

MARY MAGDALENE

That, against her furtive coming,
Singers forth an early anthem ;
But she heedeth not the greeting,
Mindful only of the Master,
And the tragic hour that slew Him ;
Seeking for the gloomèd grotto,
Hidden in the cypress shadow
In the lonely garden-vale.

Thro' the garden's twilight hushes,
Wandered One among the lilies,
'Mid the Sabbath of their sweetness,
One who hath the crownless kingdom ;
He who like a gentle gard'ner
Maketh green the parchèd places ;
And the while, His fingers dipping
In their font of dewy waters,
He anointeth them, His children

MARY MAGDALENE

Speaking to their hearts of Heaven,
Consecrating them as lessons
Of His love for after ages ;
Very early in the morning,
While the white-walled city glimmers,
Dim within the winding mist.

In the gloomèd hillside grotto
Folded lies the stained cere-cloth ;
While a face and form angelic
Shine upon the hush of silence
Like a lamp upon the darkness ;
Mary, paused before the portal,
Shades her lids with trembling fingers
Seeth how the place is empty,
Save of him, the wingèd watcher,
Falters forth the troubled question :

MARY MAGDALENE

"Where is He, the buried Master?"

While her lips grow wan with fear.

Clearer stirs the eager crimson

Of the dawn amid the cedars ;

And the almond breaks in blossom,

And the rose-lit brooklet murmurs,

And the dewy-nested birdling

Sings again a louder anthem ;

In the garden, where the Master

Wanders 'mid the world of lilies,

He whose life was of the lilies ;

And He blesses as He moveth,

All the goodly Easter Day.

Leaning o'er the edge of heaven,

With spread wings and eager faces,

All the throngs angelic wonder,

While amid the happy hushes :

MARY MAGDALENE

"He is risen, alleluiah!"

Sing their harps and vivid voices ;

And the guardian of the grotto,

Uttering the upper pæans :

"He is risen, alleluiah!"

Answers 'mid the love-lit gloom.

(At the word, the world grows lyric ;

All the birds unite their voices :

Earthly hymn, immortal music,

Mingle for a wondrous moment.

"He is risen, alleluiah!"

Whispers from the heart of heaven.

"He is risen, alleluiah!"

Rings the glad earth's antiphon.)

Kneeling 'mid the snow-white lilies,

Lifting up her languid eyelids,

MARY MAGDALENE

Dim with tears that wet her lashes
Like the dew upon the lilies,
Mary sees the gracious Master ;
Hears thro' all the song and sweetness,
How He saith: "O Magdalenè,
Lo! with thine own faith I bless thee,
Thou whose love with me was nailèd
On the tree in hour of anguish,
Was as myrrh upon my body,
When I lay within the tomb!"

KING HEROD'S SON

The rose-red sunlight faded into dun,
And gleamed in mists of gold Jerusalem,
When through the gates their three white camels
 swung
With weary hoofs all rust with desert sand.
Hard by the pillared porch of Herod, king,
The mounted Magi draw the fringed rein
For rest at last ; just as a certain Star
Wakens with arrowy argent the dusk air—
Friend of their pious hope, its light had led
Their wanderings on, yea, far midst stranger
 lands
And barren places where the jackal laughed ;
And now perchance the longed-for goal was
 near !

KING HEROD'S SON

Herod within his cedarn closet sits,
Drunk with the poisoned draught of sullen
crimes

That feed upon his soul. Around him hangs
Rich arras picturing frantic lures of lust—
A mocking woof to his diseased veins;
While dropping from a curious beam of gold
A globe of alabaster casts its ray
Upon a rusted blot of memoried gore—
The blood of Mariamne his dead queen,
Whose spectral lips lean ever to his ear
Crying a madness on his tyrant brain;
In haggard trance there have his eyes been fixed
Four days and nights, while fear and muffled
tread

Do homage to his brooding. Lo, what power
Wafts to his senses through his chamber walls

KING HEROD'S SON

Strange words to shake him from his evil dream :

"Where is the new-born babe, King of the Jews—

For we his star have seen within the east

And hither are we come to worship him?"

The Magi pause outside the brazen gates,

Where smoking torches blur the starry night

'Mid wagging of centurion tongues. Pale-robed

In samite wrought with strange device

'And breathing odors of an Eastern clime,

Their beards bleached wondrous with the weight
of years,

The story they repeat ; while in the dusk

The freighted camels drowse upon their knees.

And Herod hidden by a pillar hears,

Clutching the marble with his withered hands,

Weak with his fear and hate. Then forth he
comes

KING HEROD'S SON

With hail of welcome to his kingly guests,
Bidding them enter in the palace halls,
And brimming goblets with his precious wine,
As at his board he gives them honored place ;
And while they tarry o'er their heads the Star,
Brightening within the violet voids of night,
Silvers the cradle of another king.

Now Herod's favorite son felt Herod's hate,
On hearing of the new-born rival king,
As, noted not, he stood beside his sire
With frowning face while feasted the wise Three.
And so it was, when in the wide white night,
Mounting their camels they set forth again,
Along the way that led to Bethlehem,
Secret he followed in his curious youth,
Telling no person in his father's house
And cloaking with precocious craft the garb

KING HEROD'S SON

That prated of his princely birth. Behold,
The strange Star swam before them in the blue!

Out through the sentry-guarded city gate,
Which at a glint of Herod's signet-ring
Yields grudging egress to the caravan—
The bold boy lurking where the shadows flit—
They journey 'neath the heaven's solemn hush;
Always the Magi's agèd eyes upraised
Unto the lustre in the calm mid-air,
And on their lips a holy murmuring
Of hymns in alien tongue, while the night-breeze
Blows burdened with rich incense that they take,
With gold and divers costly offering,
To lay before an infant's swathèd feet.
Like forms of dream they thread the olive groves
Whose stirring leaves seem little lips that hail

KING HEROD'S SON

The pious purpose of their hearts, and now
The open sky and wattled shepherd huts
With ghostly fleeces huddled in the fold
And drowsy guardians bending on their crooks ;
And so, 'mid dew-wet ways of quietness,
Where Love beyond the meaner love of men,
Poises with wide-spread wings invisible
Under the pulsing stars ; and thus at last,
The hills crowned by the humble hamlet walls
Of Bethlehem, where o'er one straw-thatched
 roof,
The wretched outhouse of the hostelry,
A happy beacon pours its silver beams.
At the frail door faith knocks with trembling
 hand,
Full of the wonder of such lowliness—
The child of Heaven 'mid the crowding kine !

KING HEROD'S SON

And with the Three enters King Herod's son
To mock the monarch cradled in a byre !

The while, confusion reigned in Herod's house
At knowledge of the prince's secret flight,
And soldiers sought through all the city streets
With torch and spear, but got no bruit of him ;
And so came dawn and noon and eve again,
When rose the cry, the prince was at the gates !
Tearful, the queen cast arms about his neck,
Having no thought save joy of his return,
But Herod, wroth, bade him declare the thing
That held him thus in hiding from their ken
And put unwonted light within his eyes ;
For as in some rich wonder did he walk,
Smiling upon them speechless. Then at length
He broke his silence to the sullen king,

KING HEROD'S SON

Reporting all the marvel of the love
Which changed his hate to homage of the child.
And at his words Herod had slain his son,
The while his fury raged, but love prevailed
In that he deemed a spell was on his soul.
He bade his slaves raise up the prostrate youth
And keep him prisoned till the madness cease ;
Thus bound he put him questions of the babe,
Thinking to send his messengers of death
To take him where he lay ; but vain his wit ;
Nothing would he affirm but happy love
For him the lord of Jewry newly-born.
Then Herod bided full of bitter craft
The coming of the Magi back again,
According to their pledge, but they came not ;
For had the boy his father's hate revealed,
Whereat they turned their steps another way.

KING HEROD'S SON

Then forth went Herod's edict on the land
That babes of tender years be foully slain,
And at the news wild grief assailed the boy,
Until the queen for pity of his tears
In secret loosed his bonds ; thinking perchance
To move him to his olden filial mind
Instant he fled the palace as before,
Passionate to warn the parents of the child,
And lo, he learned how they had left the place
And hasted into Egypt ; at the news
He turned rejoicing ; near the palace gates,
The hirelings found and bore him to the king.
Then did he cry : "Put by thy sword, O Sire !
For hath the babe escaped." On hearing him,
The wrath of Herod frothed his livid lips,
And through a mist of blood he bade them strike ;
But when he saw that he had slain his son—

KING HEROD'S SON

Upon his lips the Christ-born smile of love,
Madness o'ercame him, and he reeled and fell.
Thus was he borne into his golden house,
And on his couch 'mid spectral shapes of fear
Raving aloud he lay until he died.

THE CRYPTS OF THE HEART

Down o'er the winding stairs of self,
Down through the inner dark,
With fearful feet I go ;
Slippery the way and damp
With old forgotten tears.
I groping go alone,
Unto the silent crypts that keep
Youth in a meet sarcophagus,
Where wingèd forms are gathered,
With fingers on their lips,
Watching the shrouded biers
Of the dead things within the heart ;
No sounds disturb their sleep ;
And there I count the dead,
Behold their faces sleeping ;
The cere-cloth from the lips

THE CRYPTS OF THE HEART

Of some old sin, I draw ;
Or kiss the brow of some chill faith ;
And envious I grow
Of the pale pasts
And of the deeds of death.
“O, morning’s hope !” I cry,
“Art thou no more for me ?—
Or thou, once-dear companion-wraith ?”
The blood-blot on the breast
Of some fair faith I slew,
I consecrate with tears.
“Live, live again !” I say,
“Art thou so dead ?
Thou wast not born to die !”
And lo, a war of words,
The sound of answering voices !
“I died in giving life

THE CRYPTS OF THE HEART

Unto a greater need—
Mourn not my fate!"
And one that smiled in sleep:
"Not wholly dead! I keep
My sweetness for a future time,
My light for other days!"
And one: "Not yet!—
When alien ills betray,
My face and hand for help!"
Then from the lips of sin:
"Thy garden-hour of agonies
Will know my feet, my cup
Will comfort on a sterner cross!"
Then once more silence,
Darkness and the pale faces
Of the mute watchers,
With fingers on their lips.

THE LAST SHOT

Life's ammunition spends; the smoke-wreaths
trail

Across this earthly breach. I fainting lean
On the worn weapon of my days, so mean
A stay for the good Captain's trusts that fail.
I have not striven; and now the foes prevail.
My bitter tears of shame shut out the scene
Of conquest from these eyes, that could not glean
The far-off hope my braver comrades hail.

Can all be o'er and naught be left to dare
For youth and faith, whose dreams were once so
sweet?

My spirit sickens at this poor defeat—
Too weak was I to keep the old command.
My God, my God, reach out to me Thy hand:
The last shot flashes on the darkened air!

THE MIDSUMMER MOON

From sources sad and strange as death,
It draws the marvel of its bloom,
Kindled and colored by the orient's breath—
The moon-rose of the summer gloom.

Statelier than all earthly flowers,
It grows where dreamland-gardens lie
Beyond the confine of this world of ours,
A mighty rose of gorgeous dye.

The genii its gardeners are :
They watch its fiery leaves unfold,
Guarding its growth from evil blights that mar,
With heavy cimeters of gold.

When lo, at last, its waxing bloom
Burns perfect for a haunted hour,

THE MIDSUMMER MOON

It wafts across the world its wild perfume,
Full of a strange voluptuous power ;
That calls from earth and ocean grave,
Vain ghosts of passion like a mist ;
Vague fleeting forms with aching arms that wave
And cold lips hungry to be kissed—
Old phantoms of the world's dear dust ;
Thinly athwart the light they flee ;
Faces that fed the torch of antique lust,
Or later lovers held in fee.

INDIAN SUMMER

When asters late their purpling fringes fold,
Like twilight stars, that set against the grief
Of winter's night ; and wastes the autumn wold,
Its crispèd crimsons loosening, leaf on leaf,
To gather with the earlier fallen gold :
Remote amid the woodland's rich decay,
The season's guardian sits, a sachem old,
Granting a goodly time, of breath too brief,
A halcyon calm that slowly ebbs away.

There, all day long, within that sylvan place,
Changeless, 'mid secret solitude he dwells,
In aged attitude of thought profound ;
His eyes, with rheum bedimmed, his time-worn
face,

INDIAN SUMMER

Intently fixed upon the moss-spread ground ;
The while, his loose lips mutter forth the sound
Of many hoary, half-forgotten spells ;
Old runes of wizardry with power to bribe
Summer, awhile, to linger and look back,
Her beauty saving from devouring blights ;
From those chill foes that hover on her track—
The hastening winter's sprites and spearèd tribe ;
Whose camp is round the flickering northern
lights.

Betwixt his knees he holds a calumet,
From whose charmed bowl the breathèd vapors
swim
In azure wreaths about his ancient face,
And make the mellow noon grow drowsed and
dim,
The wood, the sunburnt slope ; and where are set

INDIAN SUMMER

Like weathered wigwams of his vanished race,
The peaked stacks of yellow harvest maize,
Hanging foot-high, a filmy line of haze.

While thus he bides within that leafy spot,
Devising schemes of peace, the kindly seer,
Joy falls upon the golden, waning year.
In fearless merry mood, the forest folk
Around him push and peep: he notes them not;
Or how the squirrel springs with chattered joke
Along the rain of laughing chestnut burrs;
The silence broken when the pheasant whirs;
Nor when the bear, with crafty stealth a-roam,
Follows the wayward winging of the bee
To where, concealed within the hollow tree,
He finds the dripping, brown-celled honey-comb;
The sudden splash, when up the sun-shot stream
The otter ripples, 'mid the silver scream

INDIAN SUMMER

Of wild-duck startled from their marshy bed ;
Or when, anon, the loosened grape-vines shake
And thro' the thicket, with his antlered head,
The spotted buck unto the hound's far bay
A moment hearkens, ere he hies away
With rustling hoof across the withered brake.

The twilight falls ; a bending form and slow
Wends o'er the hills against the sunset skies,
Wrapped in his blanket's dusky fold. And lo,
A sudden change ! The shuddering winds arise
And snatch the last leaf from the creaking bough ;
The ghostly mists reek from the dampened
ground ;

Chill is the wood and barren ; where but now
The sachem, in his sumach-brightened place,
Retained the season in his calm control,
There, sole memorial of his sway, is found,

INDIAN SUMMER

Lingering, leaf-hid, in all its waxen grace :

The Indian pipe with cheerless, ash-heaped bowl !

AN AUTUMN SONG

Love in the heart and all the world away ;
Clasped hands and kisses tho' the sere leaves fall ;
Blight on the bough and bare the year and gray—
Yet love is love, and love's my want, my all !

Kingdoms I longed for once and fame I sought,
Yea, for the full of life my soul was fired,
Youth's die I tossed and worldly boon I bought ;
But bitter was the sweet my heart desired.

What daily tho' it be my lot to drain
The cup of lowliness that fate doth hold—
I kiss the lips that kiss me back again ;
And love, my gift, is more than fame or gold !

AN AUTUMN SONG

Clasped hands and kisses tho' the seasons range,
Tho' youth may fade and time be false and frore;
Love still is love, thro' all the chill and change,
And in my heart keeps summer's song and store!

AN OCTOBER DAY

Through jagged rifts of woodland, sere and red,
The stubble gleams like some rich treasury
floor ;

There lie the pumpkins' orbs of gold outspread
And huskèd corn heaped up in goodly store.
Among the stacks a straying moody breeze
Makes music like reverberance of brass—
Faint cymbals smote by Nature as she sees
The prophecies of spring-time come to pass.

A film is hung upon the fallow hills ;
An amber sun sleeps in the purple noon ;
The noise of blackbirds from the distance thrills—
Rude revellers 'mid the autumn's harvest boon.

Bright sumac clumps the dusty road-side deck,
Their leaves like tongues of a devouring flame ;

AN OCTOBER DAY

Mixed with dry vestige of the summer's wreck,
Gray ghosts of flowers of sweet familiar name.

There droops the flexile stalk of golden-rod,
Its precious sceptre rusted and grown hoar—
As fallen from the hand of prince anod
In fairy spell of hundred years or more.

A dampness blurs the stretching meadow sod,
Nipped by the frost to reddish-brown and
gray—
Where, grazing 'mid the milkweed's frothy pod
And thistles, drearly the cattle stray.

Yet still against the fence's vine-wreathed bars
The purple asters glow serenely bright—
Mid-autumn's flowers, which, like evening stars,
Are harbingers of winter's hastening night.

AN OCTOBER NIGHT

The bloated moon upon the bare hill's shoulder
Hangs like a wine-bag purple from the press,
And pours its light upon the fields that moulder
Under the year's oblitative stress.

And scattered thick among the mildewed furrows,
Like wigwams, rise the rusty stacks of corn ;
For inmate there the timid field-mouse burrows,
And winds like haunting spirits sigh forlorn.

And lying in and out their lengthening shadow,
Ripened and reddened in the frosty cold,
A Spaniard's greedy dream of Eldorado,
Glow the big nuggets of the pumpkin's gold.

Against the sky in lonely desolation,
A giant oak, its ruddy foliage gone,

AN OCTOBER NIGHT

Raises gaunt arms in silent supplication,—
The anguished gesture of Laocoön.

From the far woodland breathes a windy sighing
That sinks, then rises in a shuddering swell;
Then on the blast the withered leaves come flying,
Or whirling dance a frantic tarantelle.

Only the spirits of the air can follow
The mad gyrations of their rustling flight,
Till swept at last in wayside hedge and hollow,
They vanish in the shadows of the night.

Upon the moon-lit ground the hoar-frost glistens;
The night is still; a white mist heavenward
floats;
Then breaks upon the pensive ear that listens,
From marshy haunt, the bittern's dismal notes.

AN AUTUMN DAY

The ripe haw burns along the dusty road ;

And, leaning o'er the placid meadow stream,
Lithe elder bushes bear a purple load ;

The cloudy day is quiet as a dream ;
As yet the trees have felt no frosty fire,
Save some young beech upon the woodland's
edge ;

Only the sumac lights the autumn's pyre,
And color deepens on the rustling sedge.

A rhythmic sound across the silence floats,
As busy threshers beat the granary floor ;
Near by the kine lift up their hungry throats
To rob the straw-stack at the barnyard door ;
And thro' the idle wreaths of cottage smoke

AN AUTUMN DAY

Is vaguely glimpsed the red and fallow soil,
With stalwart horses bending to the yoke
On strips of stubble lessening to their toil.

From rusty censers smokes the thistle down
Where mullein's yellow tapers lume the air
On hazy altars of the hill-slopes brown,
Like wayside shrines that ease the soul of care ;
And blighted bends the lingering golden-rod,
The jester's bauble of past gala days ;
While at each breath upon the withered sod
In faëry showers falls the aster's blaze.

In restless moods, that change from grave to gay,
The year, betwixt old memories and new fears,
Smiles, glad with sunlight as a summer day,
And on the morrow melts in mist and tears ;
Doubting, perchance, of nature's guiding hand,

AN AUTUMN DAY

Sickened with dull foretaste of winter's dearth,
The soul within her strives to understand
The secrets locked within the aged earth.

THE LAST OF MAY

One song of May before she takes the veil—
Before the gray-walled convent of the past
Has shut her in! I followed in the trail
Of sound the bees, her minnesingers, cast
From silvery lute strings, till I reached at last
Her court. I drew the impleached green in twain
And, breathless, watched her, with her eyes hung
fast

In queenly quietude. I felt a pain,
Like the dull pressure of a crown, constrain
My brow in gazing. Such expression swayed
The purple of her cheek (love's dear domain!)
It was the look of one who feels the weight
Of the dark coming of a mortal fate—
Who feels, yet, royally, is not afraid!

THE MESSAGE OF MARCH

Who blows his bugle o'er the leas?

Who roves across the snow-clad hills,
With wanton locks upon the breeze,
Yellow as nodding daffodils?

Athwart the welkin, loud and long,
Sounds blare of bugle, snatch of song.

Awake, O World! (So March doth say) ;

Awake! for soon she'll wend this way,

With rose-wrought face and fair,

And April in her hair,

The Maid o' Spring!

Clasping the cruel window-grate,

With tearful face, in her gray tower,

Wan with her weary captive fate,

THE MESSAGE OF MARCH

Spring sighs away the laggard hour.
Now hark! The bugle's mellow blast!
And stripling March fares singing past
Oh! thro' the bars, as she doth stand,
She waves to him her little hand.
How long the drear delay!
She sighs, ah, well-a-day!
The Maid o' Spring!

The sluggard world from slumber wakes,
In answer to the herald call,
And as from face a lady takes
Her mask, at height of carnival,
The streamlet melts its icy guise
And trips along in olden wise,
While all its liquid notes it sets
To pulse of pebble castanets,
With palm against her ear,

THE MESSAGE OF MARCH

She lightly laughs to hear,
The Maid o' Spring!

The snows that lie on upland height
Are clipped by scissors o' the sun,
Like sheep that lose their fleeces white,
And into heaping clouds are spun,
That hang o'er fallow field and hill
And sudden showers of silver spill,
While one by one the sylvan, shy
Blue violets break like rifts of sky.
And lo! along the lea
She wanders, wayward, free,
The Maid o' Spring!

A RIME OF RAIN

What meaning hath the music of the rain,
Whose pale face glimmers at my window-pane,
Tuning his lute to many a whispered strain?
His moods are manifold. My musings guess
At curious sorrows and delights no less
Than such as on the human heart lay stress.

Romance and mystery his spirit keep;
I hear him like a timid lover creep,
Petitioning his lady's languid sleep;
Or sigh like Petrarch, to the evening breeze,
When Laura o'er Ferrara's terraces
Trailed, silken-robed, to wake the heart's ill-ease.

Across the morning meadows doth he pass,
Spilling his careless buckets on the grass,

'A RIME OF RAIN

A swain that dreameth of his dairy-lass ;
Or like a sportsman with his panting hound,
Trampling the golden grain unto the ground,
The while he follows to the bugle's sound.

And oft I hear him pace my midnight roof,
Like wight that walks his grievous ways aloof,
His bosom heavy with a sin's reproof ;
Betimes he tells his solemn beads of lead
And, monklike, mutters Aves for the dead,
That never cease until the dawn be red.

THE MOUNTAIN

I

Broad-chested giant, shadowing the land,
With lazy limbs stretched out at length,
Covered with shag and gnarled with strength,
I watch thee day by day ;
A hemlock hoar the staff of thy huge hand,
Driving along the accustomed upward trail
Thy flocks of mist, that morn and even stray
Across the vale.

Pressing with sun-browned body earth's green
couch,
While summer days their peace renew,
With half-veiled eyes of melting blue,
O'er which the shadows flit.

THE MOUNTAIN

What dreams are thine that with a magic touch
Thy spirit to contentment they beguile,
And o'er thy brows, where rugged frowns might
sit,
Persuade a smile?

II

When the empurpled curtain of the gloom
Drops slowly from its loosened cord,
Across her marble terrace toward
The purlieus of thy rest,
I watch the figure of the evening come,
One bright star buckle on her shoulder shining,
And folded in the covert of thy breast,
Lie there entwining.

Warden thou art of all the trooping stars!
Through all the night's grim hours they wait

THE MOUNTAIN

Before the threshold of thy gate
Of pine trees that uprears
Itself against the sky. There, too, those bars
Behind, fresh from some fountain bath is seen
The moon, when with her quiver she appears,
A huntress queen.

AN AUTUMN VIEW

From steaming vales are echoes shrilly borne
Of baying hounds ; slowly the mist-wreaths
creep

Along the looming pines of mountain steep,
To fade like dreams against the laggard morn ;
Blithe breaks the sun upon the wholesome day ;
The cloud-flecked air is crystal clear and warm,
The stream flows laughing on its pebbled way,
And leaping trout snap at the insect swarm.

Slow winding o'er the ruddy, fresh-plowed hills,
In clouds of dust the horses, fading, pass ;
The orchard's largess falls upon the grass ;

AN 'AUTUMN VIEW

And from the corn the toiler's whistle thrills;
A joyance fills the woodland-girded noon,
And mingles with the golden harvest task;
Yet death is garner of the autumn's boon,
And sadness lurks behind the jocund mask.

Rearing their hearselike plumes the sumach's
leaves
Along the roadside fences brightly burn;
Where asters with the year's grief seem to
yearn—

Misty as stars that break on early eves;
And through the air the tricky thistle-seed
Drifts by the languid golden-rod's late glow,
Like wingèd Ariel from bondage freed,
Unto the potent wand of Prospero.

AN 'AUTUMN VIEW

At night, through mist the spectral corn stacks
rise,
Where lie the scattered pumpkins nipped with
cold,
And there, like gnome that guards his lumps of
gold,
The moon is seen to peer with blood-shot eyes ;
Within the wood a moody spirit grieves,
Stirring with fitful hand the leafage sere—
Then suddenly alive the heaping leaves
Rush down the road as from some dream of
fear.

A FAREWELL TO THE UPLANDS

These ramparts vast, these pine-crowned pin-
nacles,

Frame in with mountain might the rule of Peace,
Who holds her fortress heights for man's release
From the world's fever-fire and frantic spell
That waste his heart. These heavenward walls
repel

The invasive thoughts that give his mind no ease.
Here nature hath her balms for life's disease,
If one amid her green enchantments dwell.

Though city coignes once more my days must
mew,

Loud o'er the sound of moil my soul anew
Shall hear the peaceful voice of water-falls,

A FAREWELL TO THE UPLANDS

That hang like banners on these granite walls :
Then calm shall fall upon my battling mind,
For dreams with forest fern my brow shall bind !

THE MOUNTAIN PEAK

Upstarting at Creation's trumpet-blare,
It fronts the forest vale with rocky face,
A monument of nature's sternest grace,
That rules remembrance with its kingly air ;
With thoughts triumphant over men's despair,
It calls on life from its high-seated place—
Drinking the fountain of encircling space
As pledge to noble hearts that dream and dare.

Benign in beauty from the morning's fires
It smiles a friend ; at eve its mood inspires
The heart with blessed calms. And yet what
wrath
Falls from its throne of terror, when, a form
Like Israel's prophet o'er the Red Sea's path,
It parts the mighty motions of the storm !

THE PINE TREE

I sing the mountain pine tree—I who know !
I am a dear disciple at his feet,
Familiar with his many moods, can tell
Each wingèd thought that haunts his swarthy
brow,—

The owl that governs all his midnight dreams,
The dove the spirit of a holier peace,
The raven wrapped in melancholy's weeds ;
And each bird-thought has power on his mind,
With all the flock of fancies—come—and gone.
He is a demigod, the darling of the stars ;
Even the maiden moon forgets her vows,
To fondle him all night upon her lap,
And run her pearly fingers through his hair.

THE PINE TREE

(The while Endymion wakes upon the hills.)

He has the goodly gift of prophecy ;

It comes with whirlwind, with the fire of storms.

He rends his beard ! He strikes his knotted
brows !

The sweat drops from his face in heavy drops !

He shouts the desolation of the world ;

The secrets in the caverns of mid-air.

O pine tree ! Jove sends down his word to you

By his own eagle from the heights of heaven !

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

Here, where the climbing pathway turns,
And the primeval mountain glades
Are mute with mighty awe, what whisper yearns,
Mysterious and forlorn,
Breeze-wafted on the ear?
The troubled soul of nature seems to mourn
In phantasies ineffable and drear!
Hark—
It swells and fades,
And swells again,
A Titan's sob of pain,
Borne from the impenetrable leafy dark;
A surging breath of grief,
Like lonely waters on a distant reef;
The solemn sighs,

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

Linger a moment ere the rumor dies
And leaves the kingly forest dumb ;
Where Silence like a picket
Crouched in the rhododendron thicket
With knotted hand of hate,
Smiles, as the echoes of the invasive sound
Shrink to the unguessed hollows whence they
come.

As some lost wayfarer in fear
Pauses before a weed-grown gate
That yields its hinges on a haunted ground,
Leaning to hear
Strange elfin music and elusive laughs
Shed on the twilight air,—
So, on the mountain's cragged stair,
Fearful, I hearken :—
Where the gnarled cedars darken

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

The noonday shattered into emerald stars ;
And hemlocks fling their lichened rafters ;
Where solitary oaks their antlers lift,
Leafless and blackened with the levin's scars ;
And 'neath the pines' cone-dripping eaves,
The air is colder ;
And odors of strange flowers reek,
And from the oozing mold
Mushrooms blanched like a corpse's cheek,
Mix with the fungus, purple, orange-hued,
And the wan sunbeams shift
On last year's matted leaves ;
Or where through many a fern-floored nook,
Wind the slow courses of the shallow creek,
Its waters, dusky-gold,—
Stained with the sodden wood
Of bitter tamarack ;

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

While on their marge, fantastical and black
The water-birches hook
Their rooty talons over log and boulder.

Now louder !

As towards the forest's inmost sanctuary
The feet advance, those whisperings wild and
fairy

Increase unto a mighty roll
Of music. Louder, and still louder,
Down the long aisles of many a centuried bole,
Like passionate trumpets that grow prouder
As victory flaunts its pennons over death,
Come maddened mirths of sound,
Confused with clamoring tongues and wild com-
mands,

And tenors multitudinous that raise
A Titan chorus of tremendous praise !

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

While whirling from the sense-confounding
brawl,

Pinions impalpable of guardian spirits beat
Against the thick, impleached leaves
That make perpetual eves
Around the outposts of that sacred seat,
Where in her rock-hewn audience-hall,
Dwelleth the sibyl of the water-fall !

O'er-arched by heavy minster-glooms
Of jagged forest boughs
And laurels candled with late rosy blooms
Like lamps in honor of some glorious vows,—
In ageless age, its spirit all unlost
To the amazement of its glad creation,
The water-fall rejoices
In endless celebration !
Erected huge upon the heaven's noon,

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

Its mossy altar stands,
Wreathed round with fluid coronal
And fadeless foam-festoon,
Majestic with the ceremonial fumes
Of spotless vapors that arise
From fleecèd sacrifice ;
Where surpliced waters swing with holy hands
Censers of mist that never fail ;
The while, innumerable mighty voices
With hoarse-grown hymn and hail
On their Creator call.

Where, from the canyon's height,
Upon the air,
Falls silverly the water's sun-lit veil,
Curtained by spray, she dwells
Weaving her rainbows over thoughts of death ;
The keeper of these wells,

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

The mountain-sibyl of prophetic breath
And features luminously pale,
Wrapped in a silence of unending sound ;
A misty spirit fair,
Wearing her youth through all the countless
æons.

Like one ascended unto holy ground,
I loosen from my feet
The weary sandals of the world ; the bright
Baptismal dewes that scatter from her palms,
In sacred rite
Fall on my spirit with ensuring calms ;
The water's pæans
And ecstatic hail
Mend with a solemn magic the torn strings
Of my dumb lyre of life, and lo, it flings
Its chords of gladness on the mounting psalms !

THE MOUNTAIN SIBYL

Watching the water's happy services,

I learn at length

Its passionate creeds,

A help for human needs :

My heart made strong with nature's strength,

And joyous with her joy and ease !

THE SPIRIT OF THE WHEAT

Such times as windy moods do stir

The foamless billows of the wheat,
I glimpse the floating limbs of her
In instant visions melting sweet.

A milky shoulder's dip and gleam,
Or arms that clasp upon the air,
An upturned face's rosy dream,
Half blinded by its sunlit hair.

A haunting mermaid 'mid the swell
And rapture of that summer sea ;
A siren of elusive spell,
Born of the womb of mystery,

THE SPIRIT OF THE WHEAT

That, airy-limbed, swims fancy-free,
Glad in the summer's mellow prime;
Full-veined with life's felicity
And faith that knows no winter-time.

At eve, when firefly luster burns
On that green flood like mirrored stars,
Against the hush, her faint voice yearns,
Breathed to a light harp's thrilling bars;

Till sinks at last in sunset slow
Midsummer's long, luxurious day,
And amber-red those ripe waves glow,
The wanton sylph resigns her sway;

For ere the rabid Dogstar's blaze,
The reapers wade within the wheat;
When grow their senses all amaze,
And amorous sights their vision cheat.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WHEAT

For lo, upon some eddying wash
Or hollow of the wind-swept grain,
Her wafted fingers foam-like flash,
Her laughing body drifts amain.

Alas! It is divine farewell;
A sighing ebbs along the wheat;
Borne onward by a golden swell,
She fades against the wrinkling heat.

IF LIKE A ROSE

If life were like a rose designed,
 That proves its purpose to be fair
And with the grace its bud divined
 Distils June's sweetness on the air ;
Then would the stubborn sheaths that hold
 The flower of the heart's ideal
Beneath the stress of time unfold
 And what we dream become the real—
 If life had but the rose's art
 And beauty burgeoned from the heart !

Then like the rose that o'er the grass
 Drops leaf by leaf its lovely freight
And tho' its purple fortunes pass
 Is calm in an accomplished fate,

IF LIKE A ROSE

Might we with less reluctant will
Yield up the harvest of our hours,
Seeing the inner grace fulfil
Its promise in old age's powers—
If life had but the rose's art
And beauty burgeoned from the heart!

THE FAIRIES' SCISSORS-GRINDER

Hearken to the cricket calling,
When the evening dewes are falling—
Hearken to his whirring wheel!
For his busy fingers' twirling
Sets his whetstone whirling, whirling,
As he sharpens fairy steel.

And the while he works he calls :
"Ladies of Titania's halls !
Fair, good folk of Fairytown !
See, the dusk hath fallen down !
With your scissors hither hie
At my cry !
Bring your bodkins rust with dew ;
I will sharpen them anew !
Try me, try !"

THE FAIRIES' SCISSORS-GRINDER

All the night you hear him cheeping,
Busy at his labors keeping,

Turning 'round his buzzing wheel;
Every now and then a spark
Flashes forth upon the dark
As he sharpens fairy steel.

And the while he works he calls:
"Pages of the Fay King's halls!
Doughty men of Oberon!
Hearken, each and every one!
Hither with your weapons hie
At my cry!
I will grind them well, I ween,
Till they are both bright and keen!
Try me, try!"

THE HORNET'S NEST

To the ceiling of the porch,

I must soon apply a torch

(Though I half am moved to pity!);

And by means of fire and smoke

Rid me of the tiny folk

Who, with lord and many a vassal,

Live within their hanging castle,

And make war like bad banditti.

Shall I leave it? Dare I scorn it?—

'Tis the home of Messrs. Hornet!

Sometimes I grow bold and say,

“Surely, they are all away!”

But, alas, the hope is vain—oh,

Wise my cautious hand to hold!

THE HORNET'S NEST

Hear their tiny trebles scold !
Out they come (the peevish folk !)
Like a sudden whiff of smoke,
Puffing from a wee volcano.

THE CRICKET

When the year grows gray and chilly,
And the north wind blows its best,
To my fireside, piping shrilly,
Comes a pert, unbidden guest.

Hid somewhere among the rafters
Or within the creviced wall,
All night long his little laughs
Fill the dusky, hearth-lit hall.

Is it Puck that deigns a visit,
Blowing on his frost-bit thumbs?
No, I need not ask what is it;
For each year the vagrant comes.

'Tis a careless, beggared cricket,
Left by all the rest to roam!

THE CRICKET

Having lost his summer ticket,
With no means of journeying home.

And for fee, the small new-comer
Pipes to me his merry lays,
Singing of the vanished summer
And the bright October days.

And I dream, while he is speaking,
Autumn's joys are back again ;
For his voice is like the creaking
Of a laden harvest-wain !

THE FAIRIES' NURSE

Safe within the cranny
Of the garden wall,
Like a gray-haired granny,
With her cap and shawl,
Sits an honest spider,
Bent with aged racks,
With her wheel beside her,
Spinning fairy flax.
And if one should ask her,
Why she takes no fun,
Wastes no time to bask her
In the noonday sun,
She would say, "My dearies,
Careless children play—
I'm the nurse o' fairies

THE FAIRIES' NURSE

And at work must stay ;
For I knit them blanket,
Weave them dainty sheet,
While they pertly prank it
With their twinkling feet.
But the winter's coming
For the elfin bands,
Frosts will soon be numbing
Tiny nose and hands,
Then when they are cozy
With my woolly skeins,
They will bless their prosy
Nurse for all her pains !”

TO DON DRAGONFLY

Let me be thy squire,
 Don Dragonfly, I pray;
I will faithful serve thee,
 All the summer day!

Never shining armor
 Clad a bolder knight;
Whither wilt adventure?
 And what wrongs aright?

Seekst thou realm of Faëry
 And Titania's court;
Wearing sleeve of ladye,
 In the tourney's sport?

Or from bad magician,
 Freeing those who die—

TO DON DRAGONFLY

Spider's webby dungeons

Holding butterfly?

Or some bee wilt vanquish,

Buccaneer so bold,

Who, with boots and cutlass,

Robs the lily's gold?

Prithee, let me squire thee,

Dragonfly, I pray;

Faithful will I serve thee,

Thro' the summer day!

FIREFLIES

Farers of delight,
At the nod of night,
Flitting from your coverts in the depth of day!
Tell me if you are
Ghosts of shooting star,
Doomed in expiation o'er the earth to stray?

Are you constellations
Of the fairy nations,
That wee wizards watch thro' tiny telescopes?
Good and baleful stars:
Venus, Saturn, Mars;
Little orbs that govern all their fears and hopes?

Oft your sudden light
Flashes on my sight

FIREFLIES

Like a lidded lantern slyly shutting, oping,
 Glancing on the way
 Of some frightened fay.
Tiny thief with pocket stuffed, in darkness
 groping !

 When your lights all gleam,
 Ah, you are a dream
Of a fairy Venice in the summer gloaming ;
 Lamps at casements glowing,
 Gondoliers a-rowing,
Mummers of Titania o'er the water roaming !

LADY-SLIPPERS

A quaint little shoemaker's shop
I found in my garden to-day,
Sweet satiny gear for a fop
Of a fairy with money to pay,
Hung there in the noon-day sun ;
Or fit for particular toes,
Like those of Titania's maids,
When they dance while the midnight goes,
In mummings and masquerades.
Some night will they troop this way,
When Oberon gives a ball,
And with fern-seed pence they'll pay,
And none will be left at all !
Then I'll know in the forest nook

LADY-SLIPPERS

Where carpet of moss is green,
That the midnight moon doth look
On a queer little gala scene.

THE ROBIN'S CREED

What's the message merry
That the robin brings,
When with antic airy
O'er the lawn he wings?
Changeless as the crimson
Of his velvet vest
Is the theme he hymns on :
How that hope is best !
"Cheer up !" is the burden
Ravelling out its chime
Like a golden guerdon,
Thro' a wintry time.
When we guess the letter
On our scroll of fate
Means defeats that fetter

THE ROBIN'S CREED

Our material state :
From the hedge we hear it,
Like a prescient elf
Or a helpful spirit—
Or one's better self.
And his tuneful "Cheer up!"
Falls on vexèd glooms
Like a drop of syrup
Pressed from precious blooms,
And less mixed and mazy
Seems our life to run,
And on heart grown hazy
Breaks an April sun—
As we hear the message
That the robin flings,
When with purple presage
Thro' our soul he wings!

A SONG OF SPAIN

To Salome M. Warren

The form of the sunset faded
Through the wreathing arms of the snow ;
And the flush of the firelight painted
On the gloom like an after-glow.

Through the room, where your fingers slender
Brought the joy that the Southland sings,
With a touch which was true and tender
From the mood of the mandolin strings.

Till the winter fled in effacement,
With the ghost of wind that grieves,
And the snowflakes caught on the casement
Seemed a drift of jessamine leaves !

And a castle rose from a breathless
Pause in the mandolin's strain—

A SONG OF SPAIN

From dreams that dissolve but are deathless ;
A spectral Castle of Spain.

And the red of the sunset's roses
Tinged tower and casement pane ;
And you moved through its chambers and closes,
And I dreamed you its chatelaine !

But the dream with the sunset fainted,
And the towers grew misty again—
Like vision of things that are tainted
With treason of joy that is vain.

Just because the rose of your lyric
Loosened leaf and fluttered apart !
—But one leaf with sweetness satiric
Drifted down in the depth of my heart !—

THE ITALIAN TONGUE

Worn stairs of sea-stained marble that invite
To old Venetian palaces ;
A gondola wherein to drift at ease
Hearing the lulling sound of summer seas
'Mid dying sunset light ;
A lute that teaches how the heart may ache,
As Petrarch's for the Lady Laura's sake ;
Sweet syllables which fall like lily leaves
That fleck the Arno thro' warm vernal eves ;
Words of a moonlight magic,
Of serenade and casement left ajar,
Of masque and carnival guitar
And stolen kisses ;
To Dante's touch, a lyre grown tragic

THE ITALIAN TONGUE

With the grim mood of death's abysses,
Whereat, Hell's gates were rifted ;
Yet sweet as the angelic hymns that lifted
His poet soul unto the golden blaze
Of Heaven and Beatrice's gaze.

LOVE'S QUIETUDE

All falsities and evil passions fall
Before the potent gaze of Love's true star ;
Across the glooms your swift arm slips to bar
Sin's ornate gates, till all desires pall ;
My ears grow sealed to sirens' songs that call
To men on life's strong waters. Where you are
My soul abides in chastened calm. afar
Removed from sense's feverish carnival.

Existence is with you a green retreat,
Full of pure fragrance, birds' songs and repose,
Where never pierce the arrows of life's heat,
Where the world's cynic minion never goes.
Content art thou, O heart ! once fain to range,
Nor wouldst thou for the world thy love
exchange !

THE MUSIC OF THE SOUL

There is a music of ethereal grace,
That breathes upon the ear of those that love,
Telling in varied strain, what feelings move,
What blest emotions in the soul have place ;
Thus may two lovers in each other trace
Those fine and tender thoughts that rise above
The tongue's expression ; and so fully prove
The perfect meaning of love's dear embrace.

Unseen, I stand within the garden's gloom,
And watch with warm eyes full of sudden tears,
My loved one's face within the lamp-lit room ;
The music of her spirit floods my mind.
Unto that strain, O world, dull not my ears
Or with thy rumors make its meaning blind !

THE CHURCH ORGANIST

Thy heart and not thy hand it is doth wake
This inmost concord of the organ's keys!
As one who, spent with upward toiling, sees
From some peaked Alps—as balm for pilgrim
ache—

Prospects of Italy with vale and lake,
Lying afar in summer's endless ease:
So hath thy music led me by degrees
To heights where Time's triumphant vistas break.

Stationed as on the utmost verge of life,
Above the levels of despair and strife,
My eyes are witness of the lights that shine
On gaugeless breadths and vast horizon line
Framing the vineyards of God's Empery—
The seat of larger bounty still to be.

INSOMNIA

From slumber's sombre fold the city clock
Aroused my dreaming sense. I counted four.
Whereon my ear kept sleeplessly the score
Of time's slow passage, till I heard the cock
With his lugubrious horn the silence shock,
As one star glimmered on the dawn's dim shore
Against life's gradual-swelling breaker roar,
Like pharos shining from its lonely rock.

Futile were all inventions of my wit ;
The subtile keys of thought refused to fit
Sleep's precious casket with its gems of dream ;
Then in those dreary hours came thy dear face,
And dominated so by passion's theme,
My lone watch bore the chrism of heavenly grace.

THE MAELSTROM

'Neath Northern skies, its guardian sits and sings
Her witchly runes ; while spectre-white and gaunt,
The charmed icebergs seek her fateful haunt ;
There, lapped betwixt her knees, anon, she swings
A giant cup, whose draught to frenzy stings
The storm god's baneful lusts ; until his taunt
And mighty, bearded laugh, his foemen daunt,
When on wild seas his wind-swept chariot rings.

In that grim gyre, which whirling ravage fills ;
Where shrieking ghosts of dead disaster file ;
Her eyes forecast, with fixed, circean smile,
From its prophetic dregs, the future's ills ;—
While at the smoking depths the kraken coils,
Its greedy lips choked with the ghastly spoils.

THE FOUNTAIN

Fountain, fountain of the square,
Leaping on the sun-lit air,
At what heights of happiness
Do thy flashing waters guess?
Standing at thy basin's brink
More I gain than kindly drink;
Fairer are the draughts I find
For the fever of the mind.
Fountain, fountain of the square,
Leaping on the sun-lit air!
Thou art life's eternal youth,
Symbol of its sweetest truth;
On thy limpid laughters follow
Spring and hope's reverting swallow,

THE FOUNTAIN

Gladness and the cloudless days
Of thy spirit's fearless praise ;
In thy art that is so eager,
In thy outflow never meagre,
In thy sparkling phantasy,
In thy pale foam's chastity,
In thy ceaseless, silver singing,
In thy bright and buoyant springing,
There is that of faith which teaches ;
How the trusting nature reaches
Upward, how it ne'er confesses
Unto earth-born bitternesses,
And to a diviner duty
Giveth forth an inward beauty.
Fountain, fountain of the square,
Thou art very sweet and fair !
Would I, too, might, upward springing,

THE FOUNTAIN

Lift my spirit so in singing.

Yea, thus mounting from the sod,

Flash my being up to God !

THE OPEN DOOR

The fever-fret of day was o'er,
And golden fell the evening's smile.
We entered through the open door
Of the great city's minster pile;
There, side by side, we paused a while,
There, for a little sober space,
While, pensive, with uplifted face,
We sought the ending of the aisle,
Where saintly faces seemed to dream,
Amid the casement's splendid stream.

Oh, pale persuasive twilight-hour,
That dulls the great world's noisy drum!
The impatient urge of worldly power,
Voiced on the lips of care, grew dumb

THE OPEN DOOR

And left us but the purer sum
Of worship. Wings unseen did beat
The air and wave a holy heat
Against our brows ; a splendor come
From shores eternal seemed to burn ;
And Heaven was not so hard to learn !

We turned to where the city laved
The threshold stones. The crimson dyes
Of casement niche and arch engraved,
The wistful gaze of saintly eyes,
Still held our hearts and hushed the sighs
Of doubt's despair. So, came the thought
That life might, too, be Gothic-wrought ;
And windowed 'round with sanctities
Of faith's uplifting prayerful palms ;
'And filled with great cathedral calms !

SPARROWS

Madcap gamin of the town ;
Mites of Mammon, bold and brown ;
Cheerful birdling chatterboxes,
Cousin to the wit of foxes ;
Vagabond as gipsy races,
Having all their nut-brown graces ;
Scorned by all your plumèd kin ;
Happy 'mid the city's din,
As the ballad-singing thrushes
Housing in their hawthorn bushes.
How at foggy morn ye lark it,
Flitting in and out the market,
Gleaning many a luncheon hasty,
Many a crumb and fragment tasty ;
At high noon, without a care,

SPARROWS

Winging thro' the sun-webbed air,
'Round the fountain's tritons playing,
Dipping in its silver spraying,
Frolic as a set of satyrs,
Flinging mock at pleasure-haters;
From the courthouse eaves and angles
Wagging tongue 'mid legal wrangles;
At the church's ivied sill
Joining in the service shrill.
Hardy chirplings, never spent
Is your spirit of content!
Summer sun or wintry sleet
Ne'er behold your joy's defeat;
Tho' the summer's goods abate
Not a whit disconsolate.
Singing with the self-same cheer
In the miser winter's ear;

SPARROWS

Rudely tho' the score is set,
Paying nature back her debt,
With a will forever thirsting
To fulfil the bliss that's bursting
From your homely, rust-brown breast.
Would we too might be possessed
Inly with such utter joy,
To o'er-sing the world's annoy ;
Learning from your flow of mirth,
How to gauge life's truer worth,
'And with braver soul akin
Take the daily sunlight in.

STRAYERS FROM ARCADIA

A sultry day! At noontide heat

I watched the quivering summer air,
The empty stretch of city street:

When, lo! it chanced I saw them there,
With idle, lagging, dust-dimmed feet—
Arcadians, come unaware!

What tempted them from wood-depths green,
From mountain spring and mossy court,
Who shyly part the laurel's screen,
Lest mortal eye survey their sport?

What curious longing thus could wean
Their hearts from shame of men's report?

The stranger sights their gaze perplex.
O'er the unusual cobble-stone

STRAYERS FROM ARCADIA

They stumble, three, of satyr sex,

Vine-wreathed and weathered ruddy-brown ;

Such ways, forsooth, the nymph might vex

Whose fair feet followed on their own.

By chance, they glimpse the city square,

Bedecked with bloom and fount at play.

'Twas good to see them thither fare.

Casting in haste their staves away,

And on the greensward sink, with bare

Limbs dappled by the golden day.

What ease ! One caught his notched reed

And blew it with delicious will.

Such notes at season of green seed

The robin's throat hath art to trill—

As one whose heart held love's full meed,

The wood-maid dreamed, gray-eyed and still.

STRAYERS FROM 'ARCADIA

Arcadians in the city square !

 Their careless laughters on my ear ;

A golden dream, antique and fair !

 With bated breath I drew anear.

(The eve was charmed . . . Thro' misty air

 They vaguely fleet and disappear.)

Sweet longing troubled all my thought ;

 My heart was held by haunting pain.

Had I the gray-eyed maid besought—

 Perchance it had not been in vain !

Might she my hand have woodwards caught,

 Love leading on with piping strain ?

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